FBI informant tells of order to break Panther-SDS ties

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By Betty Washington

An FBI informant was ordered to break up "an embryonic alliance" between the Black Panther Party and Students for a Democratic Society, a former Chicago FBI official has testified.

Joseph Stanley, former head of the FBI's counterintelligence program here, said that in May, 1969, the FBI learned the SDS and the Panthers had decided to pursue certain mutual objectives.

Stanley testified Thursday before U.S. District Court Judge Joseph Sam Perry that he asked FBI headquarters in Washington to tell the informant, William O'Neal, to disrupt the budding alliance.

His testimony came during the trial of a $4.7-million damage suit charging 28 present and former law-enforcement officials with conspiracy in the killings of Panther leaders Mark Clark and Fred Hampton in a raid on a West Side apartment Dec. 4, 1969.

Stanley and Joseph McCabe, who succeeded him in the counterintelligence post later in 1969, both testified that they believed the Black Panther Party was a revolutionary organization that stressed violence and the overthrow of the government.

STANLEY earlier testified that the FBI drew three cartoons aimed at discrediting the alleged alliance between the SDS and the Panthers to make it appear as if the Panthers had become subservient to the SDS.

The cartoons were sent to the newspaper Muhammad Speaks, published by the Nation of Islam, commonly known as the Black Muslims. Stanley said he did not know whether the cartoon ever was printed.

McCabe later testified that he believed it was FBI policy to neutralize organizations thought to be violence-prone by discrediting their members.